Youth nature camps in August on South Shore

The Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A. is sponsoring two youth camps in August. The first is a Nature Camp at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. Preregistration is required for the session which takes place Aug. 2-6 from 9am-1pm. Nature Camps are limited to 12 participants, age 8 to 10. The camp fee of $75 includes all materials.

Kids age 10 to 12 years may participate in the the Outdoor Adventure Camp Aug. 16-20 from 9am-4pm each day in a forest setting. OAC is limited to 10 participants and preregistration is required. The camp fee of $150 includes transportation plus all materials and use of equipment such as binoculars.

Activities are designed to help foster appreciation for the Lake Tahoe area and to nurture a desire to become environmental stewards.

For more information and to preregister, call camp director Liz Maul at (530) 542.2857.

72-mile paddle around Lake Tahoe to benefit charities

Updated July 25, 2010, 4:12pm: ***Lightning stopped the paddle. The duo plans to resume the trip on July 27 at 11:30am from Meeks Bay, weather permitting.***

In a quest to raise money for two nonprofits, South Shore's Aaron Hussmann and Greg Anthenien will kayak the 72-mile

perimeter of Lake Tahoe on July 25.

The fundraiser is called Paddling the Distance for People with Disabilities. The goal is to finish the paddle in 24 hours.

Money is being raised for two charities. The first is Camp Care Nevada, a nonprofit annual special needs summer camp at Zephyr Point. The second is the Special Olympics.

For more information about the paddle and how to donate, go the Facebook page or website.

Independence Lake changes not sitting well with users

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

For nearly a century, Kenny Osburn's family camped, fished and played at scenic Independence Lake.

Now, Osburn said, they can no longer do as they wish at a treasured place.

After a $15 million transaction put land around the lake under the ownership of The Nature Conservancy, Osburn and other long-time users are chafing over changes – chief among them the conservancy's prohibition of motorized boats on the lake.

"Our biggest focus is overregulation," said Osburn, 40. "The people that have been using that lake for generations have the most at stake."

Read the whole story

Stand-up paddle boarding becoming a must-do sport



By Allen Pierleoni, Sacramento Bee

Let’s see, how does this go again?

First, climb on top of the paddleboard and lay the paddle perpendicular to the board. Rise to the knees and pick up the paddle. Position the nose of the board into the wind coming off the lake. Uh-oh, the surface is rippling. That’s no good.

Take a few more strokes and get the board moving. Now rise slowly to the feet, pushing up with the hands and arms, bringing along the paddle. Position the feet on the board’s center point.

The learning curve is supposed to be five minutes and the thrill immediate, I’d been told. But wait – the board was getting tippy. … Whoa! Ker-splash!

Lake Tahoe is cold in the morning, as I was reminded several times recently during a quick how-to session on flatwater stand-up paddleboarding, or SUP.

Read the whole story

EID issues water flow warning for recreationists

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

People planning visits to Caples Creek or the Silver Fork of the American River from Aug. 2 to 6 are urged to use caution because of fluctuating water levels.

The El Dorado Irrigation District announced that test flow releases from Caples Lake,

Read the whole story

Thunderbird’s future remains uncertain



America’s most recognizable wooden speedboat, the iconic Thunderbird yacht, is celebrating her 70th year on Lake Tahoe. Since America’s Great Depression, Thunderbird has transported guests in opulent luxury between high-mountain estates and luxury resorts. While her past is privileged and legendary, her future is uncertain.

Thunderbird’s 70th birthday initiates a fundraising campaign to preserve Thunderbird operating on Lake Tahoe for generations to come. Annual operation costs, such as

insurance, fuel and maintenance to keep the Thunderbird afloat are more than $250,000. For information about sponsorships and how to save this historic vessel, please visit ThunderbirdLodge.org.

A glimpse into Thunderbird's past will help to understand her future. In 1939 George Whittell Jr., a character and raconteur, commissioned John Hacker, a Naval architect, to design an express commuter yacht in the style of Whittell's personal DC-2 aircraft and his many Duesenberg automobiles. Thunderbird was constructed at the cost of $87,000 (more than $3.3 million in today's dollars), and was launched in the pre-dawn hours on July 14, 1940, in Tahoe City. Since then, Thunderbird has arguably become America's most famous wooden boat. At 55 feet, she boasts Honduran mahogany hardwoods, polished stainless steel and elegant crystal. Her two vintage V-12 Allison Aircraft engines power her across the Lake-in-the-Sky at speeds approaching 70mph.

In 1962, Bill Harrah set out to acquire two of Whittell's Duesenberg automobiles for his auto collection, but when he returned from his meeting with Whittell, he not only had the two automobiles, but the infamous Thunderbird. Her new owner made extensive modifications, adding a deck cover, expanding the deck and installing her dual V-12 Allison Aircraft engines. Harrah was quite the entertainer, and always had his "70 mile-per-hour cocktail lounge" poised and ready to entertain the celebrities from his casinos.

Thunderbird's rich history includes transporting sports legends, recluses, stars, scientists, U.S. presidents, artists and terminally ill children. Some of the celebrity guests include Ty Cobb, Jack Dempsey, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett, Liberace, Frank Sinatra, Bill Cosby and Howard Hughes.

Thunderbird yacht and Thunderbird Lodge were transferred to Foundation 36, a 501(c)3 public charity with a mission to preserve and protect Nevada's cultural, historic and natural

treasures, in 2007. Foundation 36 has raised half the necessary funds needed to restore, rehabilitate and preserve the Thunderbird for the benefit of the Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society.

As part of her year-long birthday celebration, Thunderbird will command center stage at the 3rd Annual South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic, July 30-31, where more than 65 antique and classic boats will be on display at Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe. (www.TahoeWoodenBoats.com).

For more information visit Thunderbirdlodge.org or contact Bill Watson at (775) 828.3536 or Watson@ThunderbirdLodge.org.

Wildflower, waterfall hike with TRTA



The Tahoe Rim Trail Association is leading hikes July 28 and July 31 entitled Galena Falls Wildflower Hike.

This is a leisurely hike, which starts with a climb up and over a ridge and through the forest to a cascading waterfall. Followed by a moderate climb to a high mountain meadow in brilliant blooms; the result of late spring snow.

The trail goes a loop to a dirt road and trail. It may be hot, so bring lots of water (two liters), lunch, camera, and wind/rain gear depending on the weather. This hike is open to participants 10 years old and up; no pets; maximum number of

participants is 15.

Hike Time: Four hours

Meeting time: 10am at the Mt. Rose parking lot; north side of Highway 431 at the summit.

Distance: Six miles

Difficulty: Moderate; elevation ranges from 8,900 feet to 9,400 feet.

Register: Contact TRTA for pre-registration as space is limited.(775) 298.0012 or email programs@tahoerimtrail.org

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USFS fees force groups to cancel annual events

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

At least three groups with long-standing ties to the Eldorado National Forest have canceled recreation events this year, citing steep permit processing fees required by U.S. Forest Service cost recovery regulations.

Spokesmen for an equestrian group and two off-road motorcycle clubs say their members over the years have created and maintained trails that the Forest Service touts as amenities.

Now they’re told they must pay thousands of dollars in nonrefundable fees for environmental assessments with no assurance that they’ll receive a permit when the studies are completed.

Read the whole story

Tevis Cup isn’t just about riding horses

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

A man named Potato needs a sense of humor. A thick skin, too.

He needs to do his name proud by being unconventional. Needs to abide the mockery, scorn, even jealousy spawned by his outsized behavior. Needs to thrive on the attention, live for the good times, good booze, good women, the unceasing quest for kicks.

And Potato must look the part: the leathery Old West sage, no buttoned-down Bob afraid to get his boots dirty. He must be part scoundrel, a lover of women and mares (not necessarily in that order), and know life in the saddle and in the hoosegow.

Robert Fordney “Potato” Richardson, 67 going on 13, is a throwback – “I could see him living in the 1800s,” said friend Rho Bailey – yet too quirky to be a traditional Marlboro Man.

Read the whole story

Rich history of water skiing resurrected on West Shore

By Stephen Ward

Scores of water sport enthusiasts speed across the West Shore of Lake Tahoe, soaring through the air and performing strategic tricks such as pyramids and operating delta wing kites while water skiing. The public gathers around the edge of the shore to witness the mesmerizing performance unfolding before them, quietly marveling at each graceful act.

The scene illustrated above is a glimpse of the Water Ski Carnival the Tahoe Yacht Club used to conduct at Chamber's Landing and Homewood each summer from 1953 well into the 1990s, before the loss of key sponsors that had kept the festivity afloat. The water ski exhibitions at the time were initially two-day events that preceded the Tahoe Yacht Club's boat races. Later the exhibition was granted its own separate time slot during the summer.



Water skiing has been popular on Lake Tahoe for more than half a century. Photo/Tahoe Maritime Museum

This weekend, however, the Tahoe Maritime Museum, with the assistance of Obexer's Marina, hopes to restore what used to be a tradition on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe.

Starting tonight at 5, the Tahoe Maritime Museum will host a

water ski roundtable discussion, featuring eminent historical and contemporary figures of Lake Tahoe’s water sports history. Scheduled speakers include acclaimed water skier Mary Jo Shepherd, High Sierra Water Ski School owner Lee Schmidt, and 1950s water school outfitters Ron Rupp and Les Bartlett.

On Friday, the topics discussed tonight will be brought to life. The Water Ski Exhibition at the south end of Obexer’s Marina Pier will feature local talent operating everything from water skis and wakeboards to aquaplanes and slalom skis. The event will commence at 8am and will last for about two hours. Spectators can view the exhibition from the shoreline or sign up at the roundtable discussion tonight to survey the function on a boat.

Saturday from 10am-5pm is the annual Living History Day at the Tahoe Maritime Museum, and is the one day each year where admission to the museum is free. The Living History Day will highlight the topics discussed at the roundtable discussion, as well as having displays of boats and trophies issued at the Water Ski Carnivals of the past.

The Tahoe Maritime Museum is open Thursday-Tuesday from now until Sept. 30, and is located in Homewood, next to Homewood Mountain Resort. Admission for the lecture series is $8 for adults and free for children younger than 12. For more information, click here or call (530) 525.9253.

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(Old photos: Provided by Tahoe Maritime Museum; New photos: Provided by Warren Fallat)